



PFLAG Brisbane

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Newsletter June/July 2011

on the road with shelley...

We have had very successful trips to Canberra meeting MP's, Senators and Ministers. We met members from all parties. Most, this time, seemed in favour of civil unions which wasn't what we wanted to hear. Only a couple were against equality relating to relationship recognition. We met with 24 MP's etc. including Malcolm Turnbull and Robert McClelland's advisor. We made comment that we haven't been able to meet with Julia Gillard or her Advisor. I travelled with 2 mums, Kath Kirkwood from Brisbane and Jenny Allen from Perth. We plan to travel again to Canberra in July for more meetings. I met with Senator Sue Boyce in Brisbane who is very supportive and helpful. I also filmed a TV advert for Channel 7 which was aired in June. In Brisbane I spoke at a conference called *Mothers at the Margin* held at UQ at the end of April. This was well received. Numbers weren't large and most were already well informed.

I gave a presentation at Life Line to the trainee counsellors. This may become an annual event. Also in Brisbane I spoke at another "Marriage for Equality" rally. Numbers are growing and the rally passed without much incident. Have been discussing the National Labor Conference in December and what PFLAG can do. I am in the process of undertaking road trips Perth, Adelaide, Hobart and Roma discussing marriage equality.

I met with a mother who is setting up a PFLAG group in Canberra – now time to send out packs and check on needs of each group.



PFLAG at CARNIVALE (Pride Fair)

The day was cold but the enthusiasm was heart warming. The numbers marching seemed greater this year which was encouraging and of course many PFLAG parents marched, including Julie from Roma. This year we didn't have a stall because of insurance issues, but everyone knew we were there, because the PFLAG Mums were part of the obstacle race.

Every person who took part had to stop and give us a kiss: lots of fun !



www.pflagbrisbane.org.au

plus...

Congratulations to Shelley for winning 'Activist of the Year' at this year's 50th Anniversary Queen's Ball, held recently at Cloudland for Brisbane Pride.

"Winning this award was just as exciting and relevant to me as the other acknowledgements I have received for my efforts to gain equality for our sons and daughters. Furthermore, listening to people who began this event 50 years ago discuss how times have changed, makes me feel very glad that my son was born in 1979 not 1949. Even though some parents still struggle to initially be accepting and supportive thankfully our sons and daughters can now live their lives out and proud generally with a minimum of fuss. Thanks to those who have gone before by daring to stand up and be themselves when times were not so accepting."

Thanks go to GALFA (the Gay and Lesbian Foundation of Australia) for their donation of \$10,000 to PFLAG Brisbane. We are now able to support new groups that are just becoming established.

We have 10 groups including Canberra, 3 rural groups in NSW and several in Qld. This is very exciting to be able to assist new groups.

We also plan to use the funds from Big Gay Day to add to this project. We want everyone to know that money donated to PFLAG is used well and doesn't just go into our funds and disappear.

More about GALFA's collaboration with PFLAG on page 4.

Celebrating
a life takes
planning.

We give you
time.



When you lose someone, we understand the first thing you need is time. Time to plan, to reflect, to remember the special moments. Time to celebrate a life well-lived.

ALBANY CREEK	3325 5055	KELVIN GROVE	3356 4430
CLEVELAND	3286 5069	REDCLIFFE	3284 5268
DARRA	3375 6788	SANDGATE	3869 3077
HOLLAND PARK	3849 8411	WYNNUM	3396 4219



GEORGE HARTNETT
FUNERALS

To embrace a lifetime, we give you time.

www.georgehartnettfunerals.com.au

Australian Owned | 24 Hours | All Areas | Prearranged Funerals

02-11-19-02

Contact Us

Mail: PO Box 1372
Eagle Farm BC Qld 4009
Ph: 07 3017 1739

Mobile Helpline
0400 767 832

E: info@pflagbrisbane.org.au
W: www.pflagbrisbane.org.au

IN THE SPOTLIGHT- MICHAEL KIRBY



A human rights activist with a sharp legal mind and the courage of his convictions, retired high court judge Michael Kirby has earned a place in Australian history. Many know him as an advocate for the underdog; for raising awareness of HIV/AIDS; and for his reputation as a dissenter amongst conservative colleagues.

They also know that he's gay. And that not long after his coming out, Liberal attack-dog Senator Bill Heffernan, using parliamentary privilege, accused Kirby of soliciting underage boys while in a government car. Heffernan's evidence turned out to be forged. Kirby's grace in accepting the subsequent apology earned him a spot on Who Weekly's Most Beautiful People list.

After 13 years on the High Court, Kirby retired in 2009.

These days he's just as busy in academia, as a mediator and on international committees.

Sarah Saunders from

Fifty Something magazine caught up with Kirby recently. Here are some excerpts from that interview.

S.S. Your judgments are described as "exhibiting compassion and thoughtfulness", you are a Human Rights Medal recipient and you're working with the UN - to what extent did your personal experiences as a gay man shape your approach to other human beings?

M.K. Growing up as a gay man in a society which was pretty intolerant at the time, made me realise the weaknesses of the law and of our parliamentary system. This realisation certainly affected my approach to human rights. If one does not learn from one's own life, one must be blind.

S.S. You came out publically in 1999. Why did it take so long? Do you ever have regrets about coming out?

M.K. Although I announced my relationship publicly with my partner, Johan Van Vloten in Who's Who in 1999, for more than a decade before that, I was closely involved in the AIDS epidemic. This was a kind of language for my sexuality. Everyone who paid any attention would have known where I was coming from. Some people told me that it was a mistake to "come out".

The media then try to define you in terms only of your sexuality. As well, the attack on me in the Australian Senate occurred only two years later. However, nothing will change if everyone is required to keep their big secret to themselves. This is irrational behaviour. I hope that Johan and I have contributed to a more rational and better informed society in Australia.

S.S. If it was legal, would you marry your partner of four decades, Johan?

M.K. If marriage were available, it is not certain that Johan and I would get married. He says that, 42 years later, it is still too early to tell whether we are right for marriage. However, our own individual decision is irrelevant. The issue

is one of principle and the availability of marriage to young people especially, who feel the need for a public affirmation.

S.S. What's the secret to your relationship's longevity?

M.K. In my view, the secret of the long duration of my relationship with Johan is that we are good friends and companions. We never run out of things to talk about. He reads books all the time and tells me about

them. This, and lots of laughter, have kept us going for the entirety of our relationship. As well as this, when we have a disagreement, I always give in. This is what I tell young people. Give in. Look at the big picture. Even if you think you are right, you may well be wrong. And in any case, is it worth fighting over?

S.S. What makes you happy?

M.K. I think I am genetically programmed to be happy. Why should I not be? I have had loving parents, critical siblings, marvellous teachers and a magnificent partner. Mine has been a fortunate life.

S.S. Do you think same sex marriage will be legal in the next five years?

M.K. Same-sex marriage will definitely come to Australia and I expect within the next five years. The notion that the marriages of heterosexual people are somehow threatened by opening up marriage to gays is completely unconvincing. Refusing a basic civil right provided by law in a secular society on the ground of the religious objections of a section of society is wrong, and contrary to our traditions of secularism and a fair go.





The Gay and Lesbian Foundation of Australia [GALFA] was established recently as one of the first national not-for-profit charitable organisations to focus specifically on gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) people and communities. The need is great, as GLBTI communities are under represented as recipients of funding, grants and philanthropy. Governments and non-government agencies, including philanthropic organisations, have sometimes been too cautious to fund culturally specific gay and lesbian programs for fear that well-organised and well-resourced ideological opponents to gay and lesbian issues might unfairly characterise them as 'promoting a lifestyle'. We are advocating a new approach to philanthropy to improve the culture of responsiveness and giving, in both the GLBTI and mainstream communities. We are encouraging people from all walks of life to be involved and

to feel they are achieving something through their involvement. This may be through small regular financial donations, providing for GALFA through a bequest, or volunteering time and energy to our work. We are very pleased to have chosen PFLAG as our first grant recipient. PFLAG was a perfect choice for several reasons, including their national focus, proven longevity, and success in supporting families and friends of GLBTI people. The volunteer-basis of both PFLAG and GALFA generates very minimal overheads and means that all of the grant can go towards the important work. This grant will support the development of ten new PFLAG groups in rural and regional Australia through the provision of advertising materials and start-up funds. We wish those groups well as they support local families.

Want more information on GALFA ?

W: www.galfa.org.au.

E: info@galfa.org.au

*or check out GALFA on Facebook
or Twitter [galfa_aus](https://twitter.com/galfa_aus).*



NEXT PFLAG MEETING
SATURDAY 30TH JULY
PAUL MARTIN - Psychologist
is our Guest Speaker
1.30 pm
30 HELEN ST NEWSTEAD

Thanks to Erica, Morgan and Kathleen for packing 1400 envelopes with information for the Labor Conferences that are to take place around the country. We will need another packing day in the near future because the National Conference will be held in December in Sydney. We hope to give every delegate information that will assist with the introduction of "marriage equality" into this country.



Pride Ceremonies®
Jennifer Cram
GLBTI-Positive Marriage Celebrant
Finalist ABIA awards 2010 with 99.62% rating
Commitment, Naming and other ceremonies for GLBTI families
Legal Marriage Ceremonies respectful and inclusive of GLBTI family members and friends
07 3378 3005
www.prideceremonies.com.au



ABOUT US

PFLAG believes that educating the community about sexual diversity makes people less judgemental and removes the 'fear' factor about knowing someone who is LGBTI.

PFLAG is totally voluntary and organised by parents. We believe there is a need to:

Ø *Help people become aware that sexual orientation isn't a choice.*

Ø *Promote an understanding that those living in the gay community aren't deviant or lacking in morals.*

Ø *Highlight the struggle of self loathing versus self acceptance.*

Ø *Emphasize the prevalence of suicidal attempts for LGTBI youth between the ages of 15 and 24 years. (LGBTI youth are 6 times more likely to suicide than heterosexual youth).*

Ø *Make people aware of the fear of abandonment by family at a time when acceptance and understanding is most needed.*

Ø *Address the issue of homelessness and sexuality being relevant to 1 in 5 youth on the street or sleeping in friends houses because of family abandonment.*

Ø *Educate the wider community to the risk of depression and drug and alcohol abuse by LGBTI youth when they suffer from lack of understanding and abandonment by family.*

advertising space is available in
our newsletter and on our website
contact shelley
info@pflagbrisbane.org.au



Talking to Someone Who Really Understands Makes it So Much Easier

Working through some of the deeper emotional issues with having a gay or lesbian son or daughter can be one of the most painful and stressful experiences of your life. Counselling is a highly effective way of feeling better and also can assist in keeping your family together. *Centre for Human Potential* have been working with parents of gays, lesbians and transgender for over 15 years. Contact one of our friendly psychologists to explore whether counselling can be of real benefit to you and your family, or simply call and book a time with one of us.

Phone: 3211 1117

Email: info@centreforhumanpotential.com.au



Big Budda Boom connecting your senses

***Video to DVD
Corporate Events and-
Staging
Artwork and Design
Web Design and Hosting
Audio Engineering***

www.bigbuddaboom.com.au
info@bigbuddaboom.com.au

'Keeping Families Together'



PFLAG is very proactive in promoting acceptance and understanding of people who disclose their sexual diversity to family and loved ones. Parents often feel isolated, confused or angry when their loved one 'comes out' and this is an important area where PFLAG can offer assistance.

PFLAG believes that it is important that mainstream society understands the negative effects homophobic beliefs and outdated attitudes have on the general community in general.

Our message is delivered through local, state and national radio and television interviews, articles and advertisements in the print media, and by speaking to a range of community groups including school and parent on topics relevant to the difficulties of being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, and by lobbying political groups and advocating for change.

JOIN US AT OUR MEETINGS HELD EVERY 2 MONTHS OR CONTACT US BY PHONE OR EMAIL

info@pflagbrisbane.org.au

Ph: 0400 767 832

PFLAG Brisbane Annual Membership Form

Please complete the form below and return to PFLAG.

You can also pay online - www.pflagbrisbane.org.au

Larger donations are always welcome. Thanks for your support.

Name: _____

Ph: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email: _____

Membership Type:

☐

Family - \$25.00 annually - I have included a cheque or Australia Post Money Order made out to PFLAG Brisbane Inc.

☐

Corporate - \$100.00 annually - (includes website and newsletter advertising) I have included a cheque or Australia Post Money Order made out to PFLAG Brisbane Inc.

Mail to: PO Box 1372, Eagle Farm BC Qld. 4009

Bring to: 30 Helen St, Newstead 4006

Pay Online: www.pflagbrisbane.org.au

Pay direct deposit: Account Name - PFLAG Brisbane

BSB - 124-001

Account No - 2023-8607

Bank of Queensland